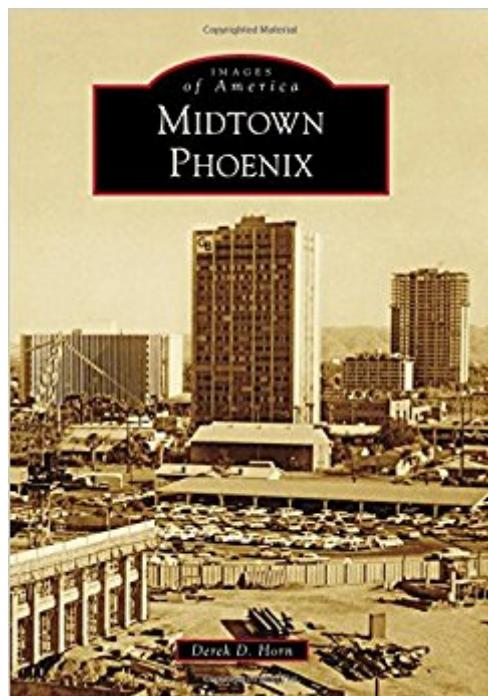


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# Midtown Phoenix (Images Of America)



## **Synopsis**

At the turn of the 20th century, downtown Phoenix was the center of commerce and government of the young city. North of downtown, the homes of business and civic leaders, along with farms and ranches, lined Central Avenue, informally known as "Millionaires' Row." As the city grew, houses and agricultural operations eventually yielded to subdivisions, commercial buildings, and high-rises. While midtown Phoenix changed dramatically over the years, it has retained much of its historic character and is continuously evolving to meet the needs of the community.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Author Derek D. Horn moved to Phoenix in 1981. After a career in building design and development regulation, he recently retired from the City of Phoenix Planning and Development Department and is a current member of its Historic Preservation Commission. His experience as an engineer, regulator, community leader, and midtown resident uniquely positions him to relate the history of this area. Photographs from the archives of the Arizona Science Center, Phoenix Public Library, and Heard Museum, as well as from the author's collection and other sources, showcase the development of midtown Phoenix and Central Avenue from its rural roots to the dynamic urban center it is today.

Derek Horn uses photographs to tell a highly engaging story of Midtown Phoenix, beginning with his pictures of the early city and its sweeping distances, sharply contrasting to the city in the book's

later pages. In 1868 we find Jack Swilling with Swilling's Ditch, the first canal, and cut through a flat expanse without a single building, the canal tapering into the distant horizon. The book illustrates the gradual change that came to Phoenix, accelerating after World War II. Opposite the Chapter One page we see an aerial view up Central Avenue at McDowell Road. The view is remarkable for the abundance of shade trees and the scarcity of buildings. Between 1948 and 1970 the area exploded in growth as revealed by a 1970 view of Central Avenue from McDowell Road. A controversial issue in that development was the Papago Freeway, which he also includes. With his photographs Horn does an excellent job of assembly and description. The book not only addresses the development of Phoenix but also provides images of some personalities behind it as well as of those who visited the city. He begins with Jack Swilling and includes Dwight and Maie Heard of the Heard Museum. We see Theodore Roosevelt in a motor car, hat held above his eyes to shield them from the desert sun. Arizona Republic publisher Eugene Pulliam is shown with Richard Nixon. Another shows Pope John Paul II standing in his bullet-proof glass box and waving at Phoenix crowds from his Popemobile. While the thrust of the book is mainly the buildings and development, Horn does not neglect notable people. I was taken by the photos of Americana, such as a 1930s image of a drive-in restaurant shaped like a coffee pot, with spout, handle, and lid. The restaurant's name was--surprise--The Coffee Pot, and was at Seventh Street and McDowell Road. We see the 1930s house of the "Trunk Murderess," Winnie Ruth Judd, who shot her roommates and shipped their dismembered bodies to LA. Another is of a horse-drawn water tank used to dispose of illegal alcohol. This, when Arizona approved prohibition in 1916, four years ahead of the nation. In an 1890s parade, horse soldiers follow color guards with the Stars and Stripes as they and US Army troops march down Washington Street, which appears to be hard-pan dirt. All the buildings are gone now. The book is easy to read, a page turner, with interesting photos and captions. Horn lays out a photographic history of Midtown as it developed into what it is today. As I read the book I decided to write this recommendation but it occurs to me I have overlooked one thing. I have found that easy-to-read books come only by hard work on the part of the author, from writing and rewriting, to intensive digging-up of facts and photos. Much labor went into Horn's book. That is apparent by photos with detailed explanations resonating with the authority of research. I give the book five stars because it deserves them.

Derek Horn has written an informative and revealing look at the development of midtown Phoenix and the impact it had on the City, and the region. He uses historical photographs to tell the story of the explosive growth in the area over the decades. Especially interesting are the photographs of

areas at different periods of time clearly illustrating the change that occurred over the decades. Mr. Horn's narrative often refers the reader between images to see the contrast firsthand. Also interesting are the photographs of key pieces of the City's past, such as the Phoenix Indian School, and of the individuals who helped shape the midtown area to what it is today. I found Midtown Phoenix to be extremely interesting and very well presented. The author clearly understands the history of the area and has done an admirable job in researching and discovering the many photographs that tell the story.

This is obviously a work by an author deeply committed to the topic; it is well written, interesting, comprehensive and informative. Many thanks for providing this!!!!!!

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